(b) Yes, Sir. DET/SDO/JE were aware of the fault and they rectified it after localizing it.

(c) Does not arise in view of (b) above.

(d) In all cases where telephones remain faulty for more than 7 days, automatic rent rebate is granted by MTNL, Delhi.

Amendment of Telegraph Act

†1948. SHRI KHAN GHUFRAN ZAHIDI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to amend the Telegraph Act; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Bill to amend the Indian Telegraph Act, 1885 has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on 4th August, 2003 to establish Universal Service Obligation Fund to meet the Universal Service Obligation (USO). USO is the Government's commitment to provide access to basic telegraph services to people in rural and remote areas at affordable and reasonable prices.

Restructuring of Media Lab Asia

1949. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Media Lab Asia (MLA) is restructured in July, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof including annual budgetary support from Government institutions associated with the project and the details of funding envisages from Non-Governmental Organisations, if any;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), collaborator of the project at the initial stage, is also associating with the restructured project;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(f) the total amount paid to MIT during the exploratory first phase of the collaboration along with the details of the collaboration/contribution given by MIT for the amount paid to them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI SU. THIRUNAVUKKARASAR): (a) The restructuring of Media Lab Asia project has been carried out with effect from 1st April, 2003.

(b) The Government has approved the full scope programme of the restructured Media Lab Asia for a period of nine years with effect from May, 2003. The annual budgetary support from the Government is projected as Rs. 65 crore per annum for the financial years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2006-07.

Funding from sources other than the Government is expected to be Rs.10 crore each for 2004-05, 2005-06 and Rs.15 crore for 2006-07.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) During an internal review taken by the Government it was felt that there need not be an exclusive relationship with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and if a research group in-charge of a project feels that researchers in institution other than MIT can contribute more towards that particular project, he should be free to access that institution.

(f) As per the Research and Collaboration Agreement (RCA) an amount of US$ 1.7 million (net of taxes) has so far been paid to MIT for a period of one year. An additional payment of US$ 425,000 (net of taxes) has been approved for the extended period of three months on a *pro rata* basis as provided for in the RCA.

As per the RCA, the collaboration with MIT envisaged active and visible technical support to: (i) make available to the Company the technical knowledge, experience, skill, know-how and processes of MIT's Media Lab to the extent relevant to the Media Lab Asia Programme; and

(ii) assist in the development of a technical plan for the Company's research and educational programes.

Tele-density in India

1950. SHRI KARTAR SINGH DUGGAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) what is the latest percentage of tele-density in India; and

(b) how does it compare with Pakistan and China?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) The latest percentage of tele-density in India as on 30.6.2003 is 5.49.

(b) As per International Telecommunication Union Report-2002, the telephone per 100 population in the year 2001 of Pakistan and China were 2.35 and 13.81 respectively whereas the tele-density of India in the year 2001 was 3.58.

VPTs Tata Teleservices in A.P.

1951. DR. DASARI NARAYANA RAO: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that M/s Tata Teleservices Ltd. has not provided Village Public Telephones in Andhra Pradesh as per the commitment made in the Licence;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what corrective measures Government have taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The company has provided 1314 Village Public Telephones so far.